



November 11, 2005

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**Jennifer Ostlind**  
Division Manager  
Development Services  
**City of Houston Planning and Development Department**

**Re: Detention/Retention Credits for Compensating Open Space  
Sub-Committee Progress Report**

Dear Jennifer,

I am excited about the progress that our sub-committee has made regarding the Compensating Open Space requirements and credits that a developer would get with the proper design of the detention/retention facilities. Our committee meeting occurred at our studio and was attended by Clark Martinson (Energy Corridor District), Thad Kudela (Kudela and Weinheimer) Landscape Architects.

The basic concept and the basis of this study are based on the premise and desire to provide higher density developments while maintaining and enhancing the quality of life. This higher density approach in sub-urban areas would affect the developments seeking lots smaller than 5,000 square feet, which under current regulations triggers the provisions of compensating open space at an increased ratio of decreased lot size to increased open space compensation.

The intent of this process is to eliminate the requirements for variances and longer approval process required when seeking a non-standard development approach. The concept that our sub-committee is recommending has two basic approaches, they are as follows:

1. **Prescriptive Method:** Under this scenario, a traditional approach currently described in Chapter 42 would be applied. The developer would provide a detention area with no amenity value, thus with no credit for any open space from the required detention facilities, standard engineering practices would drive this approach. Lots with less than 5,000 Square Feet of area have to meet with current standards of Compensating-Open-Space.
2. **Performance Standard:** The concept of this approach would be to entice developers with a simple, straight forward approach, NO-variance requirements by following a design criteria that provides a "point-system" that rewards the developer with percentage of credits for the provided open space based on "how much did they enhance the Detention Facility" and how does it integrate with the community which it serves. Various types of drainage facilities can be provided, and credits vary as follows:

<b>2.1. Natural Creeks, Drainage Ways, Bayous and Creeks</b>	
2.1.1.Preservation	100%
2.1.2.Enhancement with items from 2.3.9	35% (additional)
2.1.3.Educational component	15% (additional)
<b>2.2. Off-Site Detention Banking</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>2.3. On-site Detention/Retention</b>	<b>80%</b>
Maximum Credit, accumulated through the addition of any of the following criteria to a maximum of 100% which would equal the maximum allowed credit of 80%, the requirements and points per item are as follow:	
2.3.1.Connectivity to Major/City wide park system	5%
2.3.2.Location	10%
2.3.3.Dimensions and proportions (100' min width)	5%
2.3.4.Connectivity to other Parks within community	10%
2.3.5.Parking	10%
2.3.6.Recreational Value	
2.3.6.1. Recreational Boating	10%
2.3.6.2. Sports Fields	
2.3.6.2.1. Equipped Sports Fields	5%
2.3.6.2.2. Engineered Drainage/Irrigation	5%
2.3.7.Visual Value for Community	5%
2.3.8.Educational component	5%
2.3.9.Landscape improvements and requirements	
2.3.9.1. Sidewalks	10%
2.3.9.2. Benches & Trash Receptacles	5%
2.3.9.3. Lighting	5%
2.3.9.4. Drinking Fountains	5%
2.3.9.5. Restroom Facilities	10%
2.3.9.6. Planting requirements	10%
2.3.9.7. Bank slopes	
2.3.9.8. Interactivity with Development	5%
2.3.9.9. Design Features (Coolness Factor)	5%

*It is with great excitement that we can say our Bayou City will use its drainage requirements as a life-enhancing, nature protecting element that will provide dynamic, usable, connected and safe open spaces that will bring people together and unify our city.*

*Antonio Flamenco, Sub-Committee Member*





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## MEMORANDUM

Date: November 11, 2005

To: Marlene Gafrick, Jennifer Ostlind, CofH Planning Department

Cc.: Sub-Committee Members

From: Antonio Flamenco, AIA

Job: **CHAPTER 42 – DETENTION AND COMPENSATING OPEN SPACE CREDITS**

Job #: NA

Re.: **DEFINITIONS**

Following are the definitions that need to be part of the Compensating Open Space Credit document:

1. Walk
  - 1.1. Accessible path with slopes less than 5% and cross slopes of 2% or less.
  - 1.2. 5' foot min width
  - 1.3. Materials: Decomposed Granite, Asphalt or Concrete
  - 1.4. Benches: 500'
  - 1.5. Trash cans: Trailhead entry and exit, 1 each, minimum of 1000' apart
  - 1.6. Educational purpose: Features that provide significant education experience related to cultural, natural or historical reference. I.e: labeling of vegetation along the interpretative trail, plaques with history of the place. With a frequency of 500' or less along the required trail length. Signage or plaques must have a life expectancy of a minimum of 5 years.
2. Dimensional Requirements: Total perimeter length of the detention facility equals or exceeds the length of the diagonal distance measured to the furthest points of the property.
  - 2.1. Minimum Width: 100'
  - 2.2. Minimum Area: 5,000 Square Feet (derived from the credits)
3. Visual Value for Community. An open space that provides adjacency to a public right-of-way or Private Access Easement which is accessible to the residents as a community collector system. The adjacency must occur at least 50% of the length of the proposed open space.
4. Planting Requirements. Plant materials must be adaptable to the local climate conditions and commercially available.
  - 4.1. Trees: of 2-1/2" caliper (per American Nurserymen Standards) planted at the equivalent of 30' on center of the length/perimeter of the detention amenity.

4.2. Ground Cover:

4.2.1. Lawns: Sodded or Hydromulched.

4.2.2. Groundcovers and Grasses: 4" potted plants at 18" o.c. each way.

4.3. Irrigation: 100% coverage

5. Lighting. Minimum of 0.25 Foot-candles at any point of the trail.
6. Drinking Fountains. A minimum of one. Not spaced greater than 1 mile (5,280 feet)
7. Restroom Facilities. A minimum of one facility. Not spaced greater than 4 miles. A unisex facility that provides a lavatory and a Water Closet would qualify for this requirement.
8. Parking Requirements. A minimum of 2 vehicles per acre of "credit" area must be provided.
9. Bank Slopes. Must be a minimum average of 5:1 aspect ratio.

